

in another year, would be automatically able to get their children in. And what the school systems are saying (a) that doesn't make any sense as far as policy; and, (b) if it's full the school districts say they shouldn't have to take the option students; we don't have to take anyone else's, this is something that just they feel is not technically correct to be done. Senator Abboud talked about...a little bit about cost per student, and I would love to compare Westside and North Platte in regard to how much money we have available and what we can offer a student at what levy. And I'd compare that any day. And I suspect we, in North Platte Public Schools, would die, if we could, to get into the Omaha Westside district, because it's that quality of a program, it's a tremendous school. Omaha Westside is in a very fortunate situation, they can accept all option students, and they just simply do, whether they have to expand or not, they simply do. They don't reject any option student. And they also have the wonderful position that I wish all our schools were in, that people are dying to get in, no one wants to leave. I mean that's incredible, that's great! I wish we could do that. But, unfortunately, the rest of us can't do that, we're under budgets. And even on 1050, Senator Abboud was saying maybe this has to do with money. Good Lord, my district loses \$267,000, that's almost as much as the entire Omaha Public School system, they're only into \$300,000. So don't tell me it has to do with gaining more money, for crying out loud. It has nothing to do with that. It's simply a simple policy that says if a school district has closed its area for option enrollments, there should be no exceptions made. But it also says, as Senator Pirsch pointed out, that if a school district wants to make a policy that says we will allow families and siblings in, they can still do so. It does not put a mandate that they cannot. It simply means they don't have to, but they still could if they so desire.

SENATOR CROSBY: One minute.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: And that's a local control, local decision. But we shouldn't, when we're trying to say they have to cut back, you know, as many school districts are going to have to cut back, and when we put lids on, if that's what we're going to do, and spending reductions, at the same time say, oh by the way, you don't have room, but you have to take these other kids anyway, and oh, by the way, we're not going to give you as much money as your per pupil cost, we're only going to